

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L TEHRAN 5361

EXDIS

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: SHUM, IR, US
SUBJ: AUDIENCE WITH SHAH

REF: TEHRAN 5346

1. MY DIALOGUE WITH THE SHAH DURING JUNE 18 AUDIENCE WAS RATHER ANIMATED ON SUBJECT OF HUMAN RIGHTS. IN THE LONG MONOLOGUE WHICH BEGAN THE AUDIENCE, SHAH HAD TOUCHED BRIEFLY ON SUBJECT, SAYING THAT HUMAN RIGHTS IN THIS COUNTRY HAD TO BE SEEN IN HISTORICAL TERMS (HE WENT BACK TO CYRUS THE GREAT) AND IN CULTURAL TERMS. HE STRESSED THE NEED FOR GRADUALISM.

2. I CAME BACK TO THE SUBJECT IN DISCUSSING SOME OF THE IMAGE PROBLEMS WE HAD IN DEALING WITH IRANIAN PROPOSALS AS POSITIVELY AS THE SHAH WOULD LIKE TO SEE HAPPEN. I SAID THAT, FRANKLY, IRAN HAD TWO IMAGE PROBLEMS: (A) IT WAS SEEN AS THE HAWK ON OIL PRICES; AND (B) IT HAD AN UNSATISFACTORY RECORD ON HUMAN RIGHTS.

3. THE SHAH INTERRUPTED WITH A RATHER SARDONIC EXEGESIS ON THE "LIBERAL" APPROACH TO HUMAN RIGHTS. HE DISPARAGED WESTERN VIEWS ON THE SUBJECT; HE CASTIGATED THE CATHOLIC
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CHURCH FOR WEAKNESS AND ANACHRONISM; HE SPOKE OF "LIBERTARIANISM" WHICH PRODUCED PORNOGRAPHY AND SEXUAL ABERRATIONS. IF THAT WAS HUMAN RIGHTS, IRAN DIDN'T NEED THEM.

4. WHEN HE HAD FINISHED, I SAID THAT THE SUBJECT MATTER WITH RESPECT TO IRAN WAS USUALLY TORTURE AND IRREGULAR PROCEDURES IN DETENTION AND TRIAL. HE IMMEDIATELY STIFFENED

ON HEARING THE WORD "TORTURE." HE SAID HE HAD STOPPED ALL TORTURE SIX MONTHS AGO (SIC). THERE WAS NO MORE TORTURE. IT WAS A THING OF THE PAST. I SAID THERE WAS NATURALLY A TIME LAG IN GETTING THIS GOOD NEWS TO THE REST OF THE WORLD.

5. AS FOR DETENTION AND TRIAL PROCEEDINGS, HE REFERRED TO THE BILL BEFORE THE PARLIAMENT ON CHANGES TO BE MADE. HE SAID THAT, IN ADDITION TO THIS, HE HAD DIRECTED THE PRIME MINISTER TO MAKE ALL DOSSIERS ON ALL THOSE ARRESTED PUBLIC IMMEDIATELY THE INVESTIGATIVE PROCESS IS COMPLETED. HE HAS NOT YET ANNOUNCED THIS. HE WILL MERELY LET IT "LEAK OUT."

6. I SAID I HAD READ OF THE NEW BILL AND WAS SURE THIS WOULD BE WELL RECEIVED ABROAD. HOWEVER, I POINTED OUT THAT IT HAD BEEN HARDLY MENTIONED IN THE INTERNATIONAL PRESS BECAUSE THE GOI HAD NOT GIVEN IT MUCH PUBLICITY. HIS FIRST REACTION WAS TO SAY THAT THERE WILL BE MUCH MORE PUBLICITY WHEN THE PARLIAMENT DEBATES IT. AS SOON AS HE SAID THAT, HIS PERSIAN PRIDE CAUGHT UP WITH HIM AND HE SAID HE WAS NOT LOOKING FOR FAVOR FROM FOREIGNERS. HE DID NOT TAKE THESE ACTIONS BECAUSE OF INTEREST IN THE US OR THE UK. HE TOOK THEM BECAUSE IT WAS TIMELY IN TERMS OF IRAN.

7. I REMINDED HIS AS GENTLY AS I COULD THAT WE HAD BEGUN THIS DIALOGUE BY DILATION ON IRAN'S IMAGE PROBLEM IN THE UNITED STATES. I THOUGHT IT WOULD BE WISE FOR IRAN TO GET AS MUCH CREDIT AS IT COULD FROM POSITIVE STEPS OF THIS SORT AND NOT RPT NOT TO SUFFER FROM A WORSE IMAGE THAN IT DESERVED. HE SNIFFED AND DROPPED THE SUBJECT, BUT I PRESUME HE GOT CONFIDENTIAL

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THE MESSAGE.
SULLIVAN

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